

SUPER BOWL MINI-PLANNER
SAMPLE OP-ED
619 WORDS



Complete the Pass on Super Bowl Sunday. *Give Your Keys to a Designated Driver Before the Game Begins.*

Super Bowl Sunday has become one of America's biggest and most entertaining national sporting events as friends and families gather to watch the big game each year and to enjoy all of the festivities surrounding it. Yet, it is also one of the year's most dangerous days on the nation's roadways, due to impaired driving-related traffic crashes.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), nearly 50 percent of all traffic fatalities over the Super Bowl weekend last year were caused by impaired drivers with blood alcohol levels of 0.08% and above. But serious crashes – and deaths – can be prevented.

That's why [Local Organization] is joining with other federal, state and local highway safety and law enforcement officials to remind all of those who plan on using alcohol on Super Bowl Sunday to act responsibly by designating a sober driver before the big game begins.

The national effort is lead by TEAM (Techniques for Effective Alcohol Management), an alliance between the National Football League (NFL), other professional sports leagues, as well as the entertainment facilities, concessionaries, and broadcasters that support them including RADD (Recording Artists, Actors and Athletes Against Drunk Driving).

Designating a sober driver before the Super Bowl party begins and making sure friends don't drive drunk are just two of several, simple steps to help avoid a tragic crash or an arrest for impaired driving.

If you are attending a Super Bowl party:

- Don't starve yourself before or during the party. Enjoy the food as well as the drink;
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol too fast. Pace yourself – eat, take breaks, alternate with non-alcoholic drinks;
- Designate your sober driver before the party begins and give that person your car keys;
- If impaired, don't even think about getting behind the wheel. Ask a sober friend for a ride home; call a cab, friend or family member to come and get you; or stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober;
- And remember, *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*. Take the keys and never let a friend leave your sight if you think they are about to drive while impaired.

If you are hosting a Super Bowl party:

- Serve lots of food -- particularly high-protein dishes -- and be sure to include lots of non-alcoholic beverages;
- Stop serving alcohol at the end of the third quarter of the game -- and begin serving coffee and dessert;
- Be sure all of your guests designate their drivers in advance, or help arrange ride-sharing with sober drivers;

- Keep the numbers for local cab companies handy, and take the keys away from anyone who is thinking of driving while impaired.

As a Super Bowl host, act like the head coach for the day. Make sure every player on your roster has a smart game plan before the party even begins.

Nationally, more than 17,000 people died in impaired driving-related highway crashes during 2003. Every 30 minutes, nearly 50 times a day, someone in America dies in an impaired driving-related crash. Hundreds of thousands more are injured each year.

Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is simply not worth the risk because the consequences are serious and real. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be really significant.

Please remember to complete the pass this Super Bowl Sunday. Give your keys to a sober, designated driver before the big game begins.

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